



LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP

PROGRESS REPORT 2016



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada

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Message from the Warden

We have a welcoming spirit and tradition in Simcoe County. With more than 50,000 foreign born residents within our borders and 107 different languages being spoken, our communities pride themselves on their openness and diversity.

I'm extremely proud of the work we continue to do to embrace newcomers and encourage settlement in our region.

Immigration is truly a win-win for all, as our communities can benefit from an enhanced labour force, economic development opportunities, increased cultural exposure, and a larger tax base—I truly believe this region is one of the top places in Ontario to live, work and raise a family.

Our Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) agreement with Immigration, Refugees, Citizenship Canada began in 2011. At the time, County Council knew essential steps were needed to ensure our newest residents feel welcome and at ease as they establish roots in their new surroundings.

Our County's LIP supports the development of local partnerships and community-based planning around the needs of newcomers. Through the LIP, we are improving access to effective services that facilitate immigration settlement and integration, improving access to labour markets for immigrants, and strengthening local capacity to integrate immigrants.

In October 2012 LIP launched our Community Settlement Strategy. As we continue to move the meterstick, it's important to reflect on our progress and accomplishments to guide community action since our last publication.

The federal government has played an important role in financially supporting the LIP over the past five years, and the provincial government has supported initiatives that have allowed the



Gerry Marshall

Warden
County of Simcoe

County to provide further leadership in welcoming immigrants, including:

- Creation and launch of a new immigration website – immigration.simcoe.ca
- Projects to support our employers in attracting and working with newcomers including two breakfast sessions
- Launch of the Library Link project which supports member municipalities in providing welcoming environments for immigrants
- Support of the Employment Ontario network to help immigrants find work in Simcoe County

- Immigrant Entrepreneurship project

In addition to the initiatives outlined above, the LIP continues to work on a number of community consultation and engagement sessions and is in the process of completing applied research projects to better understand immigrant experiences in Simcoe County.

One of my favourite events for the past three years is our Newcomer Recognition Awards, which recognizes community leaders and champions who purposefully take action to enhance the lives of newcomers in Simcoe County.

I was also extremely humbled and moved that our region, and many of our residents, stepped forward to support Syrian families in need through direct sponsorship this past year.

I look forward to furthering our programs and progress as we embrace and encourage immigration and support newcomers in our communities.

Sincerely,

Gerry Marshall
Warden, County of Simcoe



Introduction

Simcoe County's growth and development is unique in the province of Ontario. York and Peel regions (with high immigrant populations) border the southern boundaries of Simcoe County. Highway 400 and a GO transit system (bus and train) runs through the central corridor of the county, providing an accessible transportation system for a growing, commuting residency.

In 2011, the population of Simcoe County was 446,063 and it is projected to grow to 667,000 by 2031 (County of Simcoe, 2012). Intraprovincial migration (new residents arriving from other areas of Ontario) is the primary source of population growth in Simcoe County. Most new residents arrive from the surrounding GTA, and reflect the diversity that comprises the City of Toronto and Peel and York Regions.

Direct landings (immigrants arriving in Simcoe County directly from a foreign country) vary from 550 to 700 new residents per year (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2012), and are a contributing factor to population growth. Direct landings are expected to grow in 2016, influenced by the number of communities' applications to sponsor refugee families.

Migration of immigrant residents from the GTA is often misunderstood in assessing local settlement and language needs. Funded settlement services and English language training programs are limited in Simcoe County. Some services and supports have been reduced, despite increasing needs illustrated by service numbers.

Fastest Growing Languages
Spanish, Tagalog and Chinese

Non-Official Languages

In 2006, Statistics Canada reported 66 non-official mother tongues in Simcoe County (Statistics Canada). In 2011, the number of non-official mother tongues had increased to 107 (Statistics Canada), representing growing diversity and an increase in percentage of population from the previous reporting period from 8.60% to 9.39%.

Background

All of the municipalities in Simcoe County have immigrant residents, and the demography of communities in the southern and western parts of Simcoe County are changing the most quickly. In 2011, there were 50,915 foreign born residents in Simcoe County (Government of Canada, 2011).

Intraprovincial migration (new residents moving from other areas of Ontario) is the primary influence on the growing population of Simcoe County. Growth in the southern part of the County is heavily influenced by a commuting population.

The diversity of immigrant residents reflects immigration trends throughout Simcoe County's history. It is valuable to consider the countries of origin of recent immigrants (less than five years Canadian residency) in order to assess newcomers' needs for supports and integration initiatives.



Top 10 Countries of Birth for Recent Immigrants		
Country of Origin	Recent Immigrants	Percentage of Recent Immigrant Population
United Kingdom	765	20%
India	360	10%
United States	350	9%
Philippines	250	7%
South Korea	245	7%
China	160	4%
Jamaica	120	3%
Portugal	110	3%
Colombia	105	3%
Vietnam	85	2%
Total	3,750	

Source: Statistics Canada (2011). 2011 National Household Survey.

Simcoe County Local Immigration Partnership

The Simcoe County Local Immigration Partnership was established in 2011 with funding from the federal government.

The County published the Community Settlement Strategy in 2012, providing a community plan to encourage stakeholders to adopt practices and service delivery to support the growing immigrant population in Simcoe County.

An important aspect of these activities are the contributions of the Partnership Council, comprised of senior leaders in our communities representing health, education, employment, human and social services, policing, libraries, municipal government, media, and ethno cultural groups. These community stakeholders are responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Community Settlement Strategy.





Community Settlement Strategy

The Community Settlement Strategy was publicly launched in October 2012, following a period of extensive research, data compilation, and literature reviews. The strategy is designed to be a blueprint for community action, and is based on four themes: Readiness, Opportunity, Celebrate and Inspire.

Since 2012, community stakeholders have considered organizational approaches to address the implementation of recommendations in the Community Settlement Strategy. Over time, the currency and understanding of community members has grown, and this report is reflective of the changing community ideologies and support.

This update includes highlights of community activities that align with the implementation plan recommendations, and identifies areas for further development.

Community stakeholders are encouraged to consider recommendations throughout this report in the **What can YOU do** sections.

READINESS

Strengthen basic public services to promote retention

Community Action 2012-2015

- Immigration Portal, 2012
- Newcomer Settlement Services Brochure, 2013
- Employment Sector Cultural Competency (C.C.) Training, 2013
- C.C. Learning Symposium: Growing Together, Learning Together, 2014
- Employment & Children's Services C.C. Training, 2013 & 2014
- Multicultural Centre Community Forum, 2015
- Passport to Simcoe County, 2015
- Library Link Specialist Training and Library staff Cultural Competency Training, 2015
- MOSAIC Quarterly Newsletter – Issues 1-9



Portal

immigration.simcoe.ca

The immigration portal is an online resource for newcomers in Simcoe County. Access information about:

- Local community and immigration services
- Finding work and doing business
- How to make connections with local agencies
- The experiences of newcomers living in Simcoe County
- Simcoe County and its diverse communities

Newcomer Resource Guide 2014



Developed by the Simcoe Muskoka Workforce Development Board, the County of Simcoe Local Immigration Partnership, and Community Connections/211 Ontario.

immigration.simcoe.ca
In 2015, users increased by 50.30% over 2014. That's 3,478 more users



READINESS

Cultural Competency Learning Symposium 2014

- 180 participants (health, employment, government, education, and human services sectors)
- 10 workshops, three keynote speakers, a newcomer panel, and local service exhibitors

“Well done with both theoretical and practical information to help me help my organization along our journey.”

The Cultural Competency symposium was successful in many respects:

- 90% of the participant sample indicated an increase in their ability to serve the immigrated population
- 93% of the participant sample noted they intend to pursue more Cultural Competency training
- 79% noted that the Cultural Competency Symposium influenced them to initiate change within their organization

“Absolutely loved the panel. It was wonderful to hear the first-hand stories of immigrants to Canada, made me emotional to hear the struggles these individuals and their families experienced prior to and while immigrating to Canada.”



Types of community services most frequently used by immigrants

- Libraries 55%
- Health Support Services 49%
- Recreational activities for children 45%

Almost 2/3 of recent immigrants are of core workforce age

Source: Ethno-cultural Assessment Survey (2014), Local Immigration Partnership.

Age	Simcoe County		Immigrants		Recent Immigrants	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Child: 0-14	76,345	17.10%	1,465	2.80%	695	18.50%
Youth: 15-24	58,870	13.20%	2,050	4.00%	450	12.00%
Adult: 25-64	240,985	54.00%	30,425	59.80%	2,395	63.80%
Senior: 65+	69,855	15.70%	16,980	33.40%	205	5.50%
Total	446,065	100.00%	50,915	100.00%	3,750	100.00%

Note: Numbers may not add up due to rounding.
Source: Statistics Canada (2011). 2011 Census of Population.

“Simcoe County” refers to the total population of Simcoe County including Immigrants and Recent Immigrants.
“Immigrants” refers to an individual who was not born in Canada and is not a Canadian citizen by birth. This classification includes recent immigrants.
“Recent Immigrants” refers to those immigrants who settled in Canada less than five years prior to the 2011 Census period.



READINESS

Library Link Project 2015

Libraries function in communities throughout Simcoe County as information hubs.

This unique project supported five pilot libraries to meet the changing demography and enhance immigrant access points to community information.

Project Included

- Development of curriculum and training of Immigrant Information Specialists
- Cultural Competency Training for Library Staff
- Collaboration with funded settlement agencies (YMCA, Welcome Centre mobile unit, BICS)
- Expansion of multilingual resources
- Welcoming library signage
- Marketing and Outreach Tools

Funded by Ministry of Citizenship, Immigration, and International Trade.

Pilot Libraries

- Barrie Public Library (Painswick Branch)
- Bradford Public Library
- Innisfil Public Library
- Midland Public Library
- Wasaga Beach Public Library

Project Outcomes

- 100% of Immigrant Information Specialists felt they had the necessary tools to properly serve immigrant residents
- 100% of participants indicated that they will seek further opportunities for cultural competency training



Mosaic

The MOSAIC is a quarterly newsletter that draws on the four themes outlined in the Community Settlement Strategy: Readiness, Opportunity, Celebrate, and Inspire. Each issue is designed to inform, connect, and improve service providers' capacity to serve the immigrant population. Each issue has the following features: immigrant success story, local service providers and resources, LIP updates, and cultural celebrations around the world.



“Learn French. Language is everything – learn both languages in Canada. You can’t do anything without strong language skills...it’s the single most important thing.”

Yaroslav [Yarko] Pustovyi, Issue 9, Spring 2015

“Problems come when you focus on the negative things. You need to stay positive and try a different way.”

Abdul Khan, Issue 5, Spring 2013

What YOU can do

- Consider adding language services to your overall budget (translation and interpretation).
- Send staff to cultural competency training. Make it part of your annual planning.
- When developing annual strategic plans, consider Simcoe County’s immigrant population. Develop plans of action to meet the needs of this diverse group.
- Explore the cultural diversity in Simcoe and develop innovative programming and services that serve to welcome and integrate Simcoe County’s newcomer population.

OPPORTUNITY

Promote employment and business opportunities

Community Action 2012-2015

- Hiring Immigrants Makes Good Business Sen\$, SMWDB, 2012
- Employer Information Sessions, 2014, 2015
- Employer Meeting, SMWDB, 2014
- Development of new employer on-line content
– hireimmigrants.simcoe.ca, 2014
- Immigrant Entrepreneur Initiative, 2015
- Employment Research Project, 2015



COMMUNITY SUCCESS STORY

Alba Lisa is a Mexican entrepreneur who owns and operates Alba Lisa All Natural Mexican Food, a gourmet food factory in Alliston. Alba helps newcomers successfully stay in Simcoe County by providing job opportunities in her factory. She employs newcomers from Mexico, Guatemala, Colombia, and Italy, as well as naturally born Canadians, creating a diverse workforce.

Hiring Immigrants Makes Good Business Sen\$ 2012

This document serves as an educational tool for employers looking to diversify their workforces. Find information on the following topics:

- How to recruit diverse talent and build cultural understanding
- Tips for interviewing international candidates
- Mentoring and internships for immigrants

Developed in partnership between Simcoe Muskoka Workforce Development Board and the County of Simcoe Local Immigration Partnership.

Hireimmigrants.simcoe.ca 2014

An online resource for Simcoe County employers to access information about:

- Using skilled immigrant talent to fill local labour force shortages
- Immigration processes and government programs
- Credential and skills recognition processes
- Tips for integrating and retaining skilled immigrants in your workplace

85% of employers surveyed indicated that they will use this new tool

Employers (2014). Hire Global Talent Employer Breakfast.





OPPORTUNITY

Employer Breakfasts 2014, 2015

The Local Immigration Partnership in partnership with Simcoe Muskoka Workforce Development Board (2014) and County of Simcoe Economic Development (2015) hosted two employer breakfasts.

Local employers, ranging from small to large scale enterprises along with community stakeholders attended the events. Federal, provincial, and local guest speakers covered topics such as: Express Entry, Provincial Nominee Program, International Education and Development at Georgian College, and on-boarding and diversifying your workplace for a competitive advantage.

“Very informative – especially the presentation by Georgian College – and the possibility of hiring International Students”

Recent immigrants are twice as likely to have a university education compared to Simcoe County residents as a whole

Education

Highest Level of Educational Attainment	Simcoe County		Immigrants		Recent Immigrants	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
No Certificates	72,495	20%	9,005	18%	370	12%
High School	108,655	30%	12,900	26%	820	27%
Trades	36,550	10%	6,230	13%	200	7%
College	83,940	23%	11,065	22%	590	19%
University	49,955	14%	8,125	16%	875	29%
University Certificate	10,205	3%	2,135	4%	200	7%
Total	446,065	100.00%	50,915	100.00%	3,750	100.00%

Source: Statistics Canada (2011). 2011 National Household Survey.

OPPORTUNITY

Employment

The Labour Force consists of those who are employed and those who are unemployed. The employed are people that have a job or a business, whereas the unemployed are without work, are available for work, and are actively seeking work.

Labour Force Status	Simcoe County	Immigrants	Recent Immigrants
Unemployed	8.4%	8.3%	13.9%

Source: Statistics Canada (2011). 2011 National Household Survey.

“We don’t have the Canadian experience – how do we get this when employers are not willing to help us?”

Immigrant Participant (2015).
Employment Research Project.



Removing the ‘Canadian Experience’ Barrier

Canadian experience is not an appropriate way to tell if a worker has the skills or experience to do a job.

For more information, visit the Ontario Human Rights Commission: <http://www.ohrc.on.ca>

Simcoe County

39% (141,215) of residents are living on less than \$19,999 (after-tax income)

Immigrants

36% (17,370) of immigrants are living on less than \$19,999 (after-tax income)

Recent Immigrants

59% (1,810) of residents are living on less than \$19,999 (after-tax income)

Source: Statistics Canada (2011). 2011 National Household Survey.

What YOU can do

- Consider investing in initiatives that support newcomer success in Simcoe County: **Mentorship, Networking, or Opportunities to gain Canadian Experience.**
- Support the development of an **Immigrant Employment Council**. Encourage local employers to fill vacancies with internationally-trained professionals; learn more about the benefits of diversifying your workforce, and increasing global markets.
- Assess the diversity of your workforce – seek help in recruiting, hiring, and onboarding immigrant talent – hireimmigrants.simcoe.ca.
- Familiarize yourself with the Ontario Human Rights Commission -<http://www.ohrc.on.ca>.

CELEBRATE

Supportive environment reflected through celebration of diversity

Community Action 2012-2015

- *Home Away From Home*, Rogers TV, 2014
- Ladies, Lunch, Laugh & Learn, 2013
- Global Kitchen, 2013

In Focus: Home Away From Home

**In Focus: Home
Away From Home**
2015 Marketing and
Outreach award winner!

Rogers TV highlights Simcoe County as a viable and diverse destination for new immigrants in this innovative 30-minute video. Some of Simcoe County's newest immigrant residents are introduced and audiences learn the struggles and successes experienced while settling and integrating to a new country. The video addresses cultural diversity with care and clarity and connects the viewer to the struggles newcomers face in making a new home. It is also a tool that can be used to celebrate the immigrant journey and the diversity that continues to enrich Simcoe County.



More than 500 people attend the local Diwali celebrations held annually by South Asian Association of Simcoe County





CELEBRATE

Simcoe County Newcomer Recognition Awards 2013-2015

This annual event brings together more than 100 community members to celebrate the contribution of immigrants living in Simcoe County and the organizations and businesses supporting enhanced opportunities for a growing and changing demography.

Established as a priority of the Local Immigration Partnership in 2013, the awards are open to individuals, organizations, and businesses based within Simcoe County.



Categories

- Immigrant Youth
- Immigrant Mentor
- Immigrant Artist
- Immigrant Entrepreneur
- Culturally Diverse Workforce/ Welcoming Work Environment
- Marketing and Outreach
- Multiculturalism through Education – School & Educator
- Community Champion

What YOU can do

- **Celebrate Simcoe County's diversity:** support and participate in multicultural events that celebrate the cultures and ethnicities that represent our changing demography.
- **Connect with and support Newcomer Associations and Private Refugee Sponsorship groups.**
- **Increase positive media coverage of newcomer stories and initiatives.**
- **Nominate a deserving applicant for a newcomer recognition award at immigration.simcoe.ca**

INSPIRE

Empower newcomers to contribute to local leadership capacity

Community Action 2012-2015

- Newcomer Recognition Awards, 2013, 2014, 2015

Ethnic Mosaic Partners

Since 2013, the LIP has worked collaboratively with Simcoe County's ethno-cultural and faith-based leaders.

Ethno-cultural and faith-based groups serve as informal networks that connect residents around a common culture or faith. Capacity building work has been instrumental in building trusting relationships with leaders of associations, who represent large numbers of immigrant families in Simcoe County, and mainstream organizations.

The relationships with these associations has been an important mechanism in increasing the diversity on the Partnership Council and engaging immigrants in research projects.

Two representatives from these associations were added to the new Partnership Council membership in 2015.



Passport to Simcoe County

In 2015 the Local Immigration Partnership hosted a Simcoe County Passport Event at the Simcoe County Museum.

The intention was to increase connections and build relationships between leaders of ethnocultural associations and the local mainstream organizations likely to participate in the development of a multicultural centre.

Approximately 25 service delivery agencies exhibited at the event, and were represented in presentations.





INSPIRE

Multicultural Centre

A multicultural centre is included in the recommendations in the community settlement strategy and would provide a hub for various ethno-cultural groups organizing and hosting cultural celebrations.

A centre would also provide space for service providers looking to develop partnerships and programming with Simcoe County's immigrant population.

A community consultation took place in 2015 to foster dialogue about the development of a centre.

The event was well attended with more than 80 participants including members of Simcoe County's various ethno-cultural communities and Simcoe County service providers.

Participants actively engaged in conversations on the following considerations: Facilities/Location, Programming/Services, Partnership, Funding, and Governance.



COMMUNITY SUCCESS STORY

Arjun Batra came to Canada as a student in 2004 from India, and since then, has been a role model for many immigrants and has worked hard to enhance newcomer services. Arjun is the President of Doon Academy Inc. and Canadian Secondary School Inc., and with support from the City of Barrie, initiated a cricket club. Sport is an important way for newcomers to connect and feel at home in their new country.

What YOU can do

- Consider diversifying your Board of Directors or leadership model – or consider including newcomers in your organizations decision-making processes.
- Support the development of mentoring networks for both established and recent immigrants – promote cultural knowledge exchanges and strengthen workplace and community integration.
- Develop or facilitate volunteer opportunities for newcomers.
- Develop a diversity committee.
- Strengthen relationships between newcomers and the government and political systems at the federal, provincial and municipal levels.

Local Immigration Partnership Council 2015-2016

Co-chairs

Andrew Fletcher	South Simcoe Police
Gord Wauchope	County of Simcoe - Town of Innisfil

Community Partners

Michelle Bergin	Catholic Family Services of Simcoe County	Susan Laycock	Simcoe Muskoka Workforce Development Board
Darlene Brown	Social Enterprise for Canada	Shelley-Ann Maxwell	Family TLC
Tina Christman	North Simcoe Muskoka Local Health Integration Network	Trevor McAlmont	County of Simcoe – Social Policy and Planning
Christine Colcy	Barrie Community Health Centre	Janette McGee	YMCA of Simcoe / Muskoka
Sandra Cole	Child, Youth, and Family Services Coalition of Simcoe County	Leslie Palson	Georgian College
Elmore Cudanin	The Filipino Canadian Association of Barrie and Suburban Areas	Ian Pavlik	pavliks.com
Bryan Daley	Barrie Police Service	Suzanne Roy	Conseil Scolaire Viamonde
Lori Doonan	OPP – Central Region Headquarters	Brad Shoreman	Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board
Jennifer Ellis	Gateway Centre for Learning	Rachel Sullivan	County of Simcoe – Economic Development Office
Enrique Garcia	Enrique N. Garcia Translations	Christopher Vanderkruys	Barrie Public Library
Scarlett Graham	OPP – General Headquarters	Douglas West	Lakehead University
Gayle Hall	County of Simcoe – Library Co-operative	Ellen White	My Broadcasting Corporation, 92.1 myFM Alliston
Wendy Hembruff	County of Simcoe – Ontario Works	Patricia Whittington	Georgian College
Elena Jara	Credit Canada Debt Solutions	Lauren Wild	City of Barrie, Office of the Mayor
Tatiana Khrystynko	Simcoe County District School Board	Louise Woodrow	Career Centre – Simcoe County District School Board
Martin Kuzma	Nottawasaga Futures		
Bikram Lamba	United Way of Greater Simcoe County		
David Lainez	El Remanente Fiel – Faithful Remnant Church		

Ex-Officio

Shannon Vidal	Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada
Jessica Dionne	Ministry of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade; Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport
Michèle Poisson	Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities

If you would like to contact a member of the Partnership Council, please email sclip@simcoe.ca and we will forward your request



simcoe.ca/dpt/ccs/lip